

Col. Kelly Noler, top Aerospace Education Officer in nation

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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From Left to Right: Colonel Kelly Noler, wife Connie Noler, Liz Noler, Aaron Noler, Christi Christner and Jordan Noler, daughter of Aaron and Liz Noler all pose for a picture after the awards ceremony for Kelly Noler in Denver Colo. (courtesy photo)

By Christi Christner

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The Wauneta Breeze

The Air Force is one of the seven American uniformed services in the U.S. military. It is the aerial warfare service branch of the United States Armed Forces. It provides air support for ground troops and aids in the recovery of troops in the field.

Every year there are about 2,000 or more accessions to number in the Air Force. Twenty-eight years ago Kelly Noler, father of Aaron Noler of Wauneta, was one of those 2,000.

Kelly Noler originally started out in the Army National Guard at the age of 17. However Robert Bailely, an Operations Officer for the Nebraska Air and National Guard who went to Kelly's church, talked him into joining the Air Force.

After being accepted into the Air Force, Noler spent the next 28 years working up the chain of command to a Colonel and having a very commendable military career.

He has flown five different airplanes in his career which include an F-4G, RF-4, B-1 and an E-8C (Northrop Grunman E-8 Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System or Joint STARS).

Noler's favorite part about being in the Air Force was going out on missions.

"All of the missions were important. We were just making the biggest difference with that one." Noler says when asked about his favorite mission. He was flying a F-4G with the objective to seek out and destroy surface air missile sites.

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After 30 years of service in the Air Force it is mandatory to retire unless you reach the rank of a General. Knowing that in two years he would have to retire, Noler decided to retire early.

Although Noler retired he did not stop working. Almost right away he was offered a job by the Civil Air Patrol (CAP).

This organization started in the late 1930s when more than 150,000 volunteers argued for an organization that would use their planes, flying skills and their love for aviation to protect their country.

The Civil Air Patrol became an official benevolent nonprofit organization on July 1, 1946, when President Harry Truman signed Public Law 476. Later on in May 1948, Congress passed Public Law 557 which permanently established the Civil Air Patrol as an auxiliary for the U.S. Air Force.

Today, CAP still helps out the Air Force by assisting during any sort of disaster.

Not only does the CAP have trained doctors, nurses or other medical professionals, they also have lawyers, paralegals, accountants, computer programmers, and other business professionals and executives.

For young adults between the ages 12 and 21 (cadets) there is a leadership learning, aerospace education, physical fitness and moral and ethical decision making all put together in a well- rounded program.

CAP has over 26,000 cadets across the country.

Many of the cadets later choose a military career, government job or private sector employment.

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Noler was asked to be an Aerospace Education Officer (AEO). He accepted the job because, "It was a way to give back."

If you are an instructor, helper or any way involved in CAP you are not paid for your time. It is an all volunteer organization.

"I also like that CAP is very much like the military in the way it is structured," Noler says. "I plan on staying for a while."

Noler is the Deputy Commander for Group 1 of the Florida Wing, which is in the panhandle of Florida. Group 1 of the Florida Wing is one of seven in Florida.

Although Noler has only been teaching for nearly two years, he was chosen as the top Aerospace Education Officer of the Year in the nation. Noler received the award on Aug. 17 in Denver, Colo.

When asked how he feels about receiving such a high honorary award after only being an educator for two years he says, "I am very honored. There are many AEOs and others who have been putting in an effort to educate the cadets. It's not just me."

As an AEO, Noler gets to work with the cadets. For instance he teaches cadets why airplane fly or anything that has ties to Aerospace.

"It is important to know why you want to join the military, what you want to do and to know the commitment you are making. It's different than what you anticipate it to be like. Talk to people about it and know what you are getting yourself into," Noler advises those who are thinking about pursuing a career in the military.

Kelly Noler is one of the many people who has fought for our nation. He is both a courageous and admirable man. Thanks to his actions along with the many other men and women in our

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country, we can live in a free nation.